

the practice of opening legislative sessions with prayer has become part of the fabric of our society. To invoke divine guidance on a public body entrusted with making the laws is not a violation of the Establishment Clause, but rather is simply an acknowledgment of beliefs widely held among the American people, said the Court.

Voluntary prayer in elected bodies should not be limited to prayer in State legislatures and Congress. School boards are deliberative bodies of adults. They are similar to a legislature in that they are elected by the people, act in the public interest, and are open to the public for voluntary attendance.

And let's not forget that this Nation was founded on the principle of freedom of religion. Not freedom from religion but freedom of religion. The Framers intended that the U.S. Constitution would bar the Government from enacting any law that favors one religious denomination over another, not prevent any mention of religion or reference to God in civic dialogue. The Framers recognized that freedom to practice religion and to express religious thought is a fundamental and alienable right belonging to all Americans.

The ACLU, which backed this lawsuit against the school board, has criticized those of us who have called for the school board to appeal the district court ruling. I do not share the ACLU's opinion, and more importantly, the people of Louisiana do not share the ACLU's opinion.

It is a fact that Americans often turn to their elected officials for relief, especially after being rebuffed by courts. As stated by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service:

With regard to religious liberty, the origin and growth of an individual's right to believe or not believe, and the safeguarding of that right, have occurred almost entirely outside the courtroom. The regular political process has protected the religious freedom of minorities as well as and often better than the courts.

In short, it is not unusual for Congress to advance religious liberty beyond what is available from the judiciary.

On April 29 I introduced a resolution, S. Res. 132, expressing the United States Senate's support for the practice of prayer at the beginning of school board meetings. U.S. Congressman BOBBY JINDAL has introduced a similar measure in the U.S. House of Representatives.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. DEMINT for their cosponsorship of S. Res. 132. I urge my other colleagues to support this resolution, which recognizes that prayer before school board meetings is a protected act in accordance with fundamental principles upon which this Nation was founded.

SUPPORTING RESPONSIBLE GUN STORAGE LEGISLATION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, two separate accidental shootings in Detroit on April 22 of this year left one 13-year-old boy dead and a 9-year-old boy critically wounded. These tragedies should remind us again that much more must be done to prevent access to guns by children.

According to published reports, both of these shootings involved children playing with guns inside their own homes. In both cases, the guns accidentally discharged and shot the victim in the head. In reference to the accidental shooting of the 9-year-old boy, Lieutenant James Tolbert of the Detroit Police Department commented, "This is an unfortunate and needless incident that would have been prevented if people would make sure that a weapon in the home is secure and out of reach." In addition, Lieutenant Tolbert suggested that similar shootings could be prevented through the use of trigger locks or the storage of ammunition separate from the gun.

Recent research supports Lieutenant Tolbert's suggestions. A study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that the application of responsible gun storage measures can significantly reduce the risk of unintentional shooting or suicide by minors using a gun. According to the study, when ammunition in the home is locked up, the risk of such injuries is reduced by 61 percent. Simply storing ammunition separately from the gun reduces such occurrences by more than 50 percent.

According to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, teenagers and children are involved in more than 10,000 accidental shootings in which close to 800 people die each year. Reducing the number of accidental shootings involving children and teenagers requires that commonsense gun storage measures be adopted.

During the 108th Congress, I joined with 69 of my colleagues in voting for Senator BOXER's trigger lock amendment. Senator BOXER's amendment would have required that all handguns sold by a dealer come with a child safety device, such as a lock, a lock box, or technology built into the gun itself that would increase the security of the weapon while in storage. Although the underlying gun industry immunity bill to which this amendment was attached was later defeated, the support for Senator BOXER's proposal is clear.

Requiring that guns be stored in a responsible manner could have prevented many of the accidental shootings we have seen in Detroit and around the country. I am hopeful that Congress will work to limit children's access to guns so that fewer families will have to endure the loss of their child because of a preventable accident.

HONORING IOWA FINALISTS WE THE PEOPLE: THE CITIZEN AND THE CONSTITUTION NATIONAL COMPETITION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate the students from Central Academy in Des Moines, IA who recently participated in the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution national finals in Washington, DC. The annual competition is the culmination of the students' extensive study of the American system of constitutional democracy. The team from Central Academy won the State competition, earning the honor of representing Iowa in the national finals from April 30 through May 2, 2005. I am also proud to say that they won a unit award for their impressive performance on unit 3.

Unfortunately, I was in Iowa during the national finals this year so I was unable to meet with the students from Iowa as I customarily do. However, I am always impressed by how knowledgeable and politically astute the students are who have been through this program and I understand this year's group of students was no exception. I know Iowans can be very proud to have had them representing Iowa.

The We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution program is run by the Center for Civic Education with the help of federal funding. The program provides an excellent curriculum and valuable professional development opportunities for teachers, giving students a solid grounding in the history, philosophy, and practice of our American system of constitutional democracy. The result is young people who are more politically aware, more engaged, and more equipped to be good citizens.

In closing, I would like to recognize the Central Academy students who participated in this program, Emily Burney, Julia Busiek, Kate Conlow, Tim Di Iulio, Jon Hill, Lisa Jefferson, Alix Liftka-Reselman, Phillip Miller, Ben Miller-Todd, David Nolan, Caroline Rendon, Andrew Tatge, Erin Turner, Emily Varn, and their teacher, Michael Schaffer. They can all be very proud of their knowledge and accomplishments. I would also like to recognize the We the People district coordinator, Ivette Bender, and the state coordinator for Iowa, Linda Martin, for their hard work and dedication to the We the People program.

NOMINATION OF STEVEN JOHNSON TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I would like to briefly discuss my vote in favor of cloture on the nomination of Stephen Johnson to be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency EPA. I have always believed that the President should be granted significant deference in selecting his

Cabinet and close advisers. Unlike judicial nominees, the EPA Administrator will serve for 4 years at the President's discretion.

Furthermore, the President made a good choice. Stephen Johnson, who has served the country for 24 years as a career EPA employee, is a well-qualified nominee who enjoys broad public support. When his nomination was considered by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee this spring, the committee approved his nomination by a vote of 17-1. He will serve the country well as Administrator of the EPA.

I share my colleagues' concerns about the administration's refusal to provide the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee with EPA's analysis of the clean air bills pending before the Senate. I am proud to cosponsor Senator JEFFORDS' Clean Power Act, and I believe that the administration's Clear Skies proposal is woefully inadequate. I agree that the information Senator CARPER has requested from EPA is vitally important to evaluate the differing clean air regulation proposals. EPA's refusal to turn over its analysis indicates that its own data do not lend support to the Clear Skies initiative. Disclosure of Government data to the public is a cornerstone of our democracy, and this administration has continually attempted to avoid congressional oversight. I implore Mr. Johnson, on his first day as EPA Administrator, to turn over these documents to the Senator CARPER and Senator JEFFORDS. To restore credibility to the agency that is supposed to safeguard human health and the environment, Administrator Johnson should release this information immediately.

Nonetheless, I do not believe that the administration's refusal to provide this information should stand in the way of this qualified nominee leading the Nation's Environmental Protection Agency.

SOUTH MOUNTAIN PEACE ACTION

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to praise a group of my constituents working toward the noble goal of peace. This group is called South Mountain Peace Action, and its members are active in Maplewood and South Orange, NJ. Peace Action members have circulated a petition in their community about the war in Iraq. The petition was signed by more than 1,200 concerned New Jerseyans, so I think it is important for Congress to take note of their actions.

The Peace Action petition discusses the staggering costs of the Iraq War, both in terms of American lives and taxpayer dollars. As of today, more than 1,600 American troops have died and nearly 12,000 have been wounded in action. We have now lost over 50 people with ties to New Jersey. I have attended several funerals for New Jersey's fallen soldiers, and each funeral is

a difficult, emotional experience. I have also been to Walter Reed Army Hospital and I have seen firsthand the debilitating injuries suffered by our troops.

The taxpayer costs of the war are also staggering. So far, the war and reconstruction of Iraq have cost more than \$200 billion, and the spigot of taxpayer funds continues to run. Originally, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld told us that war in Iraq would cost "under \$50 billion," but due to a lack of planning and terrible decisions by the Bush administration, the costs are skyrocketing.

This war is tainted by the faulty information that the President provided the Nation and the world about Saddam Hussein's supposed stockpile of weapons of mass destruction. But our troops are there and we must support them. And, in my view, we must work to stabilize Iraq and bring our troops home as soon as possible.

Thanks to groups such as Peace Action, our communities are speaking up about the costs of this war. I hope that their activism will bring positive results for our Nation and for our troops in Iraq and their families.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

TRIBUTE TO KIP JANVRIN

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a native Iowan and a remarkable athletic champion, Kip Janvrin. Late last month, just 3 months shy of his 40th birthday, he accomplished the amazing feat of winning the decathlon at the Drake Relays for the 15th time. Overall, Kip has finished 85 of the 88 decathlons he has entered since 1983. He has won 38 of them, which is a world record.

The Drake Relays are one of the Nation's most prestigious track and field events, held each spring at Drake Stadium in Des Moines. This year, the 96th annual Drake Relays, Kip took the field for the last time in an event, the decathlon, that he has dominated at Drake for 22 years.

Over the years, the words Drake Relays and Kip Janvrin have become virtually synonymous. From Jesse Owens to Wilma Rudolph, Gwen Torrance, Carl Lewis and Michael Johnson, the Drake Relays have seen almost all of the great Olympians in track and field. But one Olympian, Kip Janvrin, has been a dominant presence for more than two decades, competing in what is arguably the most grueling and demanding event in all of sports.

If the cheers at Drake are especially loud for Kip, it is because he is a native son of Iowa, raised in Panorama and a graduate of Simpson College in Indianola. It is fitting that the last year for the original Drake Stadium will also be the last year that this

American original competes in the Relays.

Kip is one of the top-ranked decathletes in the world, and he is the oldest active U.S. competitor in this extraordinarily demanding event. The decathlon is a 10-event competition which takes place over 2 days. It includes the 100-meter dash, long jump, shot put, high jump, 400 meter dash, 110 meter hurdles, discus, pole vault, javelin and 1,500 meter run. Kip began competing in the decathlon in 1983, and quickly excelled in all 10 events.

While attending Simpson College, Kip competed many times in the Drake Relays. His first victory came in 1987. His 15 championships at the Drake Relays are the most by any athlete in the history of that event. In 1998, he was inducted into the Drake Relays Hall of Fame. During his years at Simpson, he earned three NCAA titles in the decathlon, and two more NCAA titles in individual events. He was inducted into the Simpson Hall of Fame in 1998, and the NCAA Division III Track and Field Hall of Fame in 2004.

Kip's accomplishments are nothing short of amazing. He holds the world records in career victories, in scores over 7,000 points, and in consecutive finishes. He also holds the world record for the double decathlon, a demanding event involving every event in track and field, except for the marathon and walks.

Kip won the decathlon at the 1995 Pan American Games. As a member of the U.S. Olympic team at the 2000 Games in Sydney, Australia, he was the oldest decathlete ever to compete for the United States. In 2001, he won the decathlon at the USA Outdoor Championships. Last year, Kip came in second at the Drake Relays, the first time in 9 years that he did not come in first. However, Kip took the loss in stride, because the victor was his protégé, Travis Goepfert, also a native of Panorama, IA.

Kip is currently in his 15th year as co-head coach at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg. He and his wife, Teresa, have two sons, Jaxon, age 9, and Mason, age 7.

So as Kip Janvrin savors a victory in his final Drake Relays, I extend my congratulations and best wishes. With his self discipline, his commitment to excellence, and his enormous human decency, he represents Iowa at its very best. Win or lose, he has always been a true champion.●

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CELEBRATION OF SEX DIFFERENCES IN HEALTH AWARENESS DAY

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, May 8 to 14 is National Women's Health Week and a time that we should take a careful look at the state of women's health in this country and in particular look at the lack of equality that still exist